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Viewing cable 04ANKARA7044, DEC. 12 CAUCASUS WORKING GROUP MEETING IN ANKARA

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
04ANKARA7044	2004-12-20 08:04	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Ankara

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 007044

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2014

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SUBJECT: DEC. 12 CAUCASUS WORKING GROUP MEETING IN ANKARA

Classified By: PolMilCouns Timothy A. Betts for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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Summary

1. (C) In policy discussions with the Turkish General Staff during the Dec. 12 meeting of the Caucasus Working Group, DASD James MacDougall urged Turkey to consider how we might change our approach to the Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) conflict. The TGS representatives believed the Minsk Group had failed and suggested maybe for NATO involvement in NK; MacDougall asked for Turkey's thoughts on proposing new co-chairs, perhaps to include Turkey. MacDougall also asked Turkey to work with the Azeris to consider the alternate draft UNGA resolution on the conflict. Both sides also discussed a possible role for a NATO Peace Support Operation (PSO) in an eventual settlement. MacDougall recommended an expanded OSCE border monitoring mission between Russia and Georgia, to include the Roki Tunnel. He also requested that Turkey look into assisting the Azeris and Georgians on pipeline security for the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project. Both sides also discussed NATO's role in the Caucasus and security cooperation in the Black and Caspian Seas. In the afternoon, both sides briefed on security assistance to Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Kazakhstan and agreed to look into certain cooperative efforts during 2005. End summary.

2. (C) The Turkish General Staff (TGS) hosted the Dec. 12 meeting of the Caucasus Working Group at its Ankara HQ. The U.S. delegation was led by DASD James MacDougall, accompanied by EUCOM Deputy J5 VADM John Goodwin and 16 others representing DoD, the services, and the State Department. The Turkish HOD was BG Solmazturk, TGS J5 Chief for Disarmament and International Security Affairs. (NOTE: Representation from the Turkish MFA was noticeably absent. END NOTE.) Solmazturk very ably filled in for MG Cengiz

Arslan, J5 Chief for Strategy, who was called overseas unexpectedly.

Policy Discussion

13. (U) For the morning session, MacDougall and Solmazturk led a wide-ranging policy discussion on the overall security environment in the region. Among the key issues:

Azerbaijan

14. (C) The Turkish delegation highlighted a number of challenges in Azerbaijan, chief among them a lack of democratic traditions, poverty, ethnic strife, and negative Russian pressure (especially related to energy issues). While the Turks believe Azeris want to further integrate into the West, the Azeris also believe that the West has abandoned them on the Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) issue. According to the Turks, while the Azeris are enthusiastic players in PfP they also believe NATO must play a more active role in solving NK. Many believe the West can solve NK, but does not want to. ODC Baku rep added that NK also retards Azeri defense reform. Turkey believes the Minsk Group process has failed.

15. (C) DASD MacDougall noted that it may be useful to explore new options for dealing with NK. He noted that Azerbaijan is dissatisfied with the current co-chairs on the Minsk Group (U.S., Russia, France) since it sees the U.S. as neutral but France and Russia as siding with Armenia. Perhaps the co-chairs could be changed. Turkey might even take a direct role.

16. (C) MacDougall noted that it would be useful to think about how NATO could contribute to a resolution of the NK conflict. He noted that recently Armenia has shown greater interest in the Alliance, perhaps to balance its reliance on Russia. By relying on Russia for security, the Armenians have sacrificed economic and political ties to the West.

17. (C) The Turkish delegation added that NK interferes with Armenian-Azeri cooperation in PfP. Solving the NK issue would break Russian influence over Armenia. The Turks believe that the GOAM may be interested in pursuing a solution, but is hindered by the Armenian diaspora and its advocacy of the Armenian genocide issue. BG Solmazturk said NK seems to be "a dead-end street," and expressed doubt whether jiggering the Minsk Group would succeed. He added that the Minsk Group works for the OSCE CIO, and noted that the last CIO waited 10 months before visiting the region.

18. (C) MacDougall responded that there are useful things we can do together on the margins. First, he reported that the Azeris have submitted a new draft UNGA Resolution on NK. He asked the Turks to work with the Azeris to consider the alternate draft, but also one that calls for a UN fact-finding team to go to the region to investigate claims that the Armenians are sending settlers there to change the population dynamics on the ground. (NOTE: The Turks said that they believe 6000 such settlers have moved into the region. END NOTE.) Second, he asked the Turks to think along with us about ways that NATO could get more involved in the region, perhaps even considering a NATO PSO in the event of an eventual political settlement.

Georgia

19. (C) The U.S. DATT in Tbilisi noted that both the press and politicians in Georgia were uniformly pro-Western, and deeply appreciative of both U.S. and Turkish security assistance initiatives. Both sides agreed that the South Ossetia and Abkhazia conflicts threatened Georgia's territorial integrity and were destabilizing. The Turks noted their special interest in the Abkhazia problem, as more Abkhazians live in the Turkey than in Abkhazia itself. The Turks added that in their view the embargo on Abkhazia tends to support Russia's interests.

110. (C) DASD MacDougall noted that the Russians are lobbying to cut back on the OSCE monitoring mission on the Georgia-Russia border. He asked for the Turks' assistance in assuring that the mission is not only maintained, but expanded to include the Roki Tunnel on the border between South Ossetia and Russia, which is now controlled on both sides solely by the Russians. This would give us an independent view of what is going on along that border.

Kazakhstan

111. (C) At DoD's request, both sides added Kazakhstan back to the CWG discussions this year. SAO Almaty reported that the GOK and the Kazakh press are generally in favor of western security assistance efforts, but added that the press is

generally government-controlled. Nonetheless, he believes public support is genuine, though perhaps less so in the more ethnically Russian north of the country. The Kazakhs look to the U.S. and NATO to counter Russian domination of the energy sector. The Turkish delegation responded that Kazakhstan and other Central Asian states are generally favorable toward Turkey and see Turkey as offering a western orientation and democratic values. The Turks concede that their presence is hardly enough to overcome Russian, Chinese, and Iranian influence.

NATO and the Caucasus

12. (C) Turkey reported that NATO interoperability and lack of deployable forces remain a significant challenge in the region. BG Solmazturk complained that NATO's Partnership Coordination Cell has not successfully integrated the many different PfP and Alliance programs for Partners. He claimed that the proliferation of NATO training centers and activities has led to too many activities going on at once; "the process has turned into one big mumbo-jumbo," he said.

13. (C) Solmazturk requested that the U.S. side and Turkish side compile separate reports evaluating the success of PfP in the Caucasus to date, and recommending what to focus on in the future. Both sides agreed to exchange these reports NLT March 15, 2005. Additionally, the U.S. side noted that NATO is assigning a liaison officer soon to Tbilisi with regional responsibility for the Caucasus. Both sides agreed to invite this LNO to future CWG meetings.

Black Sea Security

14. (C) Turkey briefed that its initiative, BLACKSEAFOR, has been instrumental to increasing security cooperation in the Black Sea. BLACKSEAFOR has helped the littoral states tackle drug and human trafficking, WMD, and terrorism. Turkey also noted that its unilateral Black Sea Harmony has strengthened NATO's Operation Active Endeavor by identifying over 8000 vessels in the Black Sea and passing on information to the Alliance on ships passing through the Bosphorus to the Mediterranean. The Turks encouraged the U.S. to use our political weight with the other littorals to continue to contribute to BLACKSEAFOR. They added that in the future international security cooperation in the Black Sea beyond the six littorals will become a reality. DASD MacDougall responded that the U.S. could use its influence with Georgia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Romania, but added that Turkey would likely have more influence with the Russians on this issue.

Caspian Sea Security

15. (C) Turkey believes the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline and future trans-Caspian projects are a significant counterbalance to Russian aims to control routes for Central Asian petroleum products to the West. The Turks believe that the Central Asian states have not reached consensus on security in the Caspian and that this policy vacuum contributes to instability. Turkey supports the Caspian Guard initiative.

16. (C) DASD MacDougall added that in the Caspian we see terrorism, narcotics, and WMD proliferation as major concerns, and we are working closely with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan to counter these threats. When these countries have the resources to counter these threats, they will also have the means to secure their hydrocarbon resources. MacDougall noted that Azerbaijan has a duplicative navy and coast guard structure, which hinders both services' effectiveness.

17. (C) Finally, DASD MacDougall urged the Turks to consider helping Georgia and Azerbaijan with pipeline security for the BTC. He noted that as the terminus for BTC is in Turkey, Turkey has a special interest in assuring its security along the entire route. Turkey agreed to look into this issue.

Practical Cooperation

18. (C) Both the U.S. and Turkey briefed comprehensively on past, present, and potential future security cooperation efforts in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan. Both sides agreed on the necessity of such briefings in order to deconflict the efforts of both sides. Both sides also agreed to hold monthly defense attache meetings in Tbilisi, Baku, and Almaty to further enhance information flow. In addition, Turkey agreed to look into certain SC areas. Specifics below:

Georgia

--As Ministry of Interior troops devolve into professional

military services, Turkey will monitor this process and provide training support. Turkey is not currently prepared to provide infrastructure (read: construction) support (it has done so in Georgia in the past), but will examine it for the future.

Azerbaijan

--Turkey will discuss joint cooperation with U.S. on interface between Azeri Navy and maritime border guard interface/overlap.

--Turkey will also discuss joint cooperation with U.S. on upgrading the Azeri navy.

Kazakhstan

--After gathering further information, Turkey will consider participating in the Steppe Eagle exercise in summer 2005.

[1](#)19. (U) DASD MacDougall cleared this cable.
DEUTSCH